

**THE GREAT DUEL;
ITS TRUE MEANING
AND USES**

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The great duel; its true meaning and uses by W. R. Greg

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W. R. GREG

**THE GREAT DUEL;
ITS TRUE MEANING
AND USES**

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BY

W. R. GREG.



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THE GREAT DUEL:

ITS TRUE MEANING AND ISSUES.

IN endeavouring to estimate correctly the claims and purposes of the two combatants who are now fighting out their tremendous duel on the soil of France, in measuring their obligations and their rights, and awarding, so far as we can, to each his own share of blame or acquittal, it is necessary at the outset to put aside all irrelevant and unessential considerations, and not to suffer either our sympathies, our wishes, or our fears to confuse our judicial perceptions of the truth. Personal sympathies and antipathies have nothing to say in questions of right and wrong. Personal hopes of good or dread of evil, whether national or individual, must not be permitted to distort, or suppress, or exaggerate indisputable

facts. Neither the groans nor the anguish of the sufferer, nor even his irrelevant excellences, must blind us to his moral faults or his actual offences; nor should the harsh severity of retributive justice, however unrelenting, tempt us to deny that it *is* justice after all. We may admit that, as individuals, the French are singularly agreeable, and often loveable, and the Prussians ungenial and hard. We may be more susceptible to cosmopolitan than to patriotic considerations; we may, like Jacoby and Garibaldi, feel our hearts beat at the mere dream of a Universal Republic, and regard foreign democrats as nearer and dearer than home monarchists or nobles; we may be essentially aristocratic and anti-popular in all our tastes and predilections; we may regard the vague aspirations of nationality as more sacred and fascinating than any others; we may have the strongest preference for the Celtic or the Teutonic type of intellect and character. But all these sentiments are utterly apart from the questions—Which party is clearly right and which grievously wrong in the present quarrel? What are the victors justified in demanding, and what ought the vanquished frankly to concede? And what, for the best interests of

Europe, as well as of the combatants themselves, ought we to desire as the issue of the strife? Thus much, at least, may be asked from controversialists on the two sides, if it cannot be expected from the combatants themselves—That they shall candidly recognize indisputable facts, and frankly admit the legitimate inferences deducible therefrom.

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